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SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [ECON](#) [AF](#) [GM](#)
SUBJECT: GERMANY LARGELY IN LINE WITH THE U.S. ON WAY AHEAD
IN AFGHANISTAN

REF: A. STATE 15959
[B](#). STATE 15623
[C](#). STATE 14097

Classified By: POLITICAL MINISTER COUNSELOR JEFF RATHKE. REASONS: 1.4 (B) AND (D).

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY. Germany shares the U.S. view on the way ahead in Afghanistan as outlined in reftels, and supports the deployment of additional U.S. forces to the south and east of the country as necessary to carry out the clear-hold-build strategy. While Germany almost certainly will not commit additional troops to Afghanistan (i.e., beyond the current ceiling of 4,500) before the German parliamentary elections in September, it is open to doing more in supporting the stand-up and training of the ANA and ANP, as well as in supporting reconstruction and development. In fact, it sees its efforts in these areas as a small part of the "civilian surge" that it hopes will accompany the significant increase in U.S. troops. Germany agrees that the current dispute over the timing of presidential election and the interregnum period between the end of Karzai's term and the holding of the election as something that the Afghans must solve themselves. Assuming that Karzai does not step down on May 22, the MFA sees two possible ways that Karzai may seek to legitimize his continuation in office: 1) the holding of a Loya Jirga or 2) the creation of a transitional government that would include key members of the opposition, like Qanooni. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (C) Post met with MFA Afghanistan Task Force Director Ruediger Koenig on March 3 to follow up on a previous discussion of reftel points. We also used the opportunity to get Koenig's evaluation of last week's visit to Washington by German Special Envoy Bernd Muetzelberg and to hear about his own recent visit to Afghanistan.

"VIOLENT AGREEMENT"

[1](#)3. (C) Koenig said he had read all of our reftel points carefully and that Germany shared the U.S. view on the way ahead. This had been confirmed during Muetzelberg's visit to Washington last week, during which Bruce Riedel, chairman of the U.S. Afghanistan policy review, reportedly said the two countries were in "violent agreement" about what needed to be done. Koenig expressed understanding for the urgent need to deploy extra U.S. troops in the south and east of Afghanistan. While noting that the additional troops would probably result in more contact with the insurgents and therefore more "significant incidents," he agreed that the troops were necessary to hold territory after it had been

cleared of insurgents. Otherwise, the "build" part of the ISAF strategy could never take place. He also noted that additional troops would presumably make ISAF forces less dependent on close-air support (CAS), which would mean fewer civilian casualties -- another positive side effect. Finally, he said he understood from Muetzelberg's visit to Washington that the U.S. was planning a big "civilian surge" to accompany the increase in troops.

NO MORE GERMAN TROOPS, BUT OPEN TO EVERYTHING ELSE

14. (C) Koenig ruled out any increase in German troop levels above the current 4,500-troop ceiling before German parliamentary elections in September 2009. However, he said that Germany was prepared to do more to support the stand-up and training of the Afghan National Army (ANA) and Afghan National Police (ANP), as well as more to support reconstruction and development. He noted that a salary discrepancy within the EU had just been corrected so that EU police trainers and mentors serving in Afghanistan no longer made less than their counterparts in Kosovo and Georgia. He claimed that Germany would push the EU to follow through on its long-standing commitment to double EUPOL from its current 200 mentors to 400. He was also open to the suggestion that Germany consider expanding its participation in the CSTC-A focused district development (FDD) police training program beyond the ten districts it has already committed to do around Mazar-e Sharif and Kunduz.

15. (C) Koenig highlighted the 35 million Euros that Germany plans to spend over the next three years on rehabilitating the entire civilian part of the airport in Mazar-e Sharif.

Koenig said that Germany hopes to convince the UAE to cover half the cost of the project, allowing the extra German money to be diverted elsewhere. Koenig noted that all together, Germany has budgeted some 170 million Euros for civilian development projects in 2009 -- 80 million from the Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and 90 million from MFA. About 35 million of the MFA budget is for the support of police training.

16. (C) Koenig said that during his visit to Afghanistan last week, he had been impressed by UNAMA's emphasis in assisting the Afghan authorities, particularly the Independent Directorate of Local Governance (IDLG), in improving their capability to deliver public services at district level faster and better. He noted that all 400 districts in the country had been evaluated and traffic light-coded (red, yellow, or green) based on the current state of affairs. Koenig thought it was important that the troop surge would be accompanied by an equivalent civilian surge to help make this UNAMA initiative a success and to provide the population with concrete reasons to support the international presence.

ELECTION DISPUTE

17. (C) Koenig thought Karzai's decree, asking that the Independent Election Commission pick a new date for presidential elections that is in accordance with the Afghan constitution, was a clever political move, which had succeeded in knocking the opposition back on its heels. Koenig said that Karzai knew full well that the bringing the election forward to April was not realistic or technically possible. However, his decree had put the onus on the opposition. They would now be in the uncomfortable position of arguing in favor of a delayed election, outside the framework of the constitution. This would make it easier for Karzai to claim a legitimate right to stay in power during the interregnum.

18. (C) Koenig, who knows Karzai personally from a tour in Islamabad in the late 1990's, had a 30-minute courtesy call with the president during his visit to Afghanistan last week. He said Karzai's main concern was maintaining his legitimacy as president between May 22, when his term of office expires, and the holding of the election. Since it was impossible to amend the constitution (Koenig claimed it could not be

changed within one year of an election), he thought there were two possibilities for bridging the gap: 1) the holding of a Loya Jirga to legitimize Karzai remaining in power during interregnum, or 2) the creation of a transitional government that Karzai would presumably lead, but which would also include his key opponents, like Speaker of the Lower House Qanooni.

19. (C) Koenig agreed that in the end, the election dispute was a matter for the Afghans to solve themselves. Germany would not promote one potential solution over the other, nor would it speak out in favor of any particular candidate. He argued that the international community's only interest was that the forthcoming election -- as well as the campaign preceding the election -- be considered free and fair by all concerned. He said the Czech EU Presidency was expected to release a statement in the next day or so making these points. Koenig